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and for many years spent his summers on a farm on the coast of Maine; first at York Harbor, and afterwards at Castine, where he combined study with the hard work upon his farm in which he delighted.

The influence which Ames acquired over his students and over the members of his own and of other Faculties, with whom he came in contact, was only in part due to his great learning. He was a man who combined the highest personal character with manners as charming as they were simple. He doubtless sacrificed the possibility of extensive writing, to discussion with his pupils, and to helping them in their needs of every kind, intellectual and personal. To many of them he will always remain the ideal scholar and gentleman.

In the Autumn of 1909, he suffered a slight cerebral hemorrhage which was followed by others more severe, and on January 8, 1910, he died at New Ipswich, N. H.¹

SAMUEL WILLISTON.

JOHN SHAW BILLINGS (1838-1913)

Fellow in Class II, Section 4, 1881.

John Shaw Billings, elected an Associate Fellow of this Academy May 24, 1881, was born in Cotton township, Indiana, the 12th of April, 1838, and died in New York City, March 11, 1913. He was the son of James Billings of Saratoga, New York, and Abbie Shaw of Raynham, Mass. When he was about five years of age the family removed to Rhode Island and five years later went back to Indiana.

The narrow circumstances of the family did not permit the expenditure of much money upon the boy's education. His native ability and indomitable perseverance, however, procured for him a college education, and he was graduated with distinction at Miami University in 1857. Charles Elliott, Professor of Greek in that University, writing of him at this time, says that Billings was a young man of very superior talents and extensive acquirements and possessed of a great facility in communicating what he knew. This estimate was fully

¹ The writer is indebted for much in this sketch to the Memoir prefixed to Professor Ames's collected Essays.

justified by the brilliant career of Billings. He obtained his medical education and received the degree of M. D. at the Medical College of Ohio in 1860. The outbreak of the Civil War found Billings Demonstrator of Anatomy in this College. He was appointed First Lieutenant and Assistant Surgeon in the United States Army in April, 1862, and throughout the war was actively employed in that department of the service.

He was married in 1862 to Miss Kate M. Stevens of Rochester, N. Y. and in December of 1864 was transferred to the Surgeon General's office in the War Department where he remained on active duty for the next thirty years and until relieved at his own request, on October 1st, 1895. His duties during this period were of the most varied character. Such only as could be performed by a man of the highest ability and almost unequalled capacity for work. Among his activities were the Report upon the Conditions of Barracks and Hospitals, 1870, Hygiene of the United States Army, 1875. In 1879 he was detailed as member of the National Board of Health, that most promising but ill-starred attempt at a central sanitary authority which, notwithstanding its character and noble contributions to science, was finally destroyed by the political activities of jealous rivals and for many years had no competent successor.

The examination of barracks and hospitals brought to his notice the defects in the ordinary systems of ventilation and heating and his book upon Ventilation and Heating was one of the results of this study, and the Johns Hopkins Hospital was another and even more important contribution. It is not too much to say that this group of buildings has been a model and the study for all establishments of this sort. The interest which Billings had in the construction of hospital buildings did not cease with the completion of this task. One of the last of his activities was his service as consultant in the designing of the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston. His knowledge of vital statistics was profound and his writings upon this fundamental branch of medical science are many, among the best in our own or any other language. His extensive and accurate reports upon the Medical and Vital Statistics of the United States and of the Census reports of 1880, 1890, 1900 and 1910 are achievements of especial importance.

He will perhaps be longer remembered for his service to medical literature than in any of his even greater activities. From the time of his assignment to the care of the Library of the Surgeon General's office he labored most strenuously not only for the increase of the

collection but also for a sufficient catalogue of its contents. Hence the Index Catalogue and later the Index Medicus which have been of the highest value to the student of medicine.

After a few years spent in the congenial labors of a Professor of Hygiene in the University of Pennsylvania he was persuaded to accept the responsibilities of the New York Public Library in the year 1895 and here were spent the remaining years of his life.

He was a frequent and welcome visitor in the medical circles of Europe and his addresses upon many subjects of professional interest were always received with eager attention. He held many distinctions, conferred by the universities and literary societies of this country and Europe.

The names of Dr. Billings and Dr. Weir Mitchell were, of all the physicians of their day in this country, probably the two best known in foreign lands.

H. P. WALCOTT.

GASTON BOISSIER (1823-1908)

Foreign Honorary Member in Class III, Section 4, 1904.

Gaston Boissier² was born in 1823 at Nîmes, in the Provence, a region almost as Roman, with its ancient remains, as Italy itself. Not unnaturally, the attention of the youthful Boissier was first turned to archaeology, which in its most significant aspect — the imaginative reconstruction of the past — was a dominant interest throughout his career. His earliest publications were on literary themes, but on such themes as involve a new creation of lost material; he discussed in his Latin dissertation for the doctorate, the manner in which Plautus translated Greek plays — plays no longer extant; he wrote on the poet Attius and the Roman tragedy of the republic — tragedy that has come down to us in scattered fragments; he essayed a task that has fascinated many — the reconstruction of the life and writings of the erudite Varro; he argued that Seneca's plays could not have been written for the stage. Of these works, the earliest appeared in 1857, and the latest in 1861; during part of this time, and before, he had been professor of rhetoric at Angoulême and Nîmes.

² This sketch of Gaston Boissier is taken from the article published by the writer in the *New York Nation* for June 18, 1908, pp. 550f.